

CHRONICLE

MARCH 1984

The annual conference of the Meat Workers Union in Wanganui gave notice on 9 March that the union intended to call nationwide rolling stoppages from 19 March, unless there was an immediate end to the wage freeze, a general wage increase from 1 April, and restoration of the right to negotiate awards. Mr Knox expressed full support for these demands which were, he said, in line with FOL policy. The Auckland-Tomoana Freezing Works Union adopted a wait-and-see attitude, while the freezing companies announced that they would close all works if the stoppages went ahead. The Prime Minister warned that the meat workers' action would jeopardise discussions on a general wage order with the FOL and on 11 March the meat workers' general secretary, who had attended a meeting of the FOL national executive, volunteered to withdraw the campaign.

The tripartite discussions between the Government, unions and employers resumed on 14 March. The FOL and CSU asked for a flat general wage increase of between \$17 and \$38, but the Prime Minister rejected this claim as "quite ridiculous" and said the Government would grant a percentage-based general wage order from 1 April, the size of which would be determined by Cabinet. A flat dollar-based increase, he claimed, would produce further distortions in the wage structure. Federated Farmers expressed support for a flat increase on the grounds that relief was needed by lower-income earners. The Manufacturers Federation also supported a dollar increase, and the Employers Federation, which had opposed this at first, turned round to support a dollar increase as long as it was small. Faced with this opposition to the Prime Minister's original proposal, Cabinet on 23 March decided to grant an across-the-board increase of \$8 a week from 1 April.

The Government ruled out any further wage negotiations this year, but the Freezing Companies Association argued that talks were necessary on non-monetary matters, which needed revising and updating. The FOL dismissed the wage order as "not nearly enough", while the Leader of the Opposition described it as a calculated political provocation designed to agitate the trade union movement. Storemen and packers at Kinleith and at Shell Oil in Auckland walked off their jobs in protest.

A meeting of more than 1000 union delegates and officials in Auckland on 26 March was told by Mr Knox to deal directly with the employers and to demand further wage increases and the right to direct bargaining. Soon afterwards short strikes and overtime bans in support of "catch-up" payments and in protest against employers' refusal to bargain were reported from Kinleith, the Westfield freezing works, Ford's assembly plant at Wiri, the Union Carbide Company in Auckland, the Sealord fish factory in Nelson, and other workplaces.

In a speech to the Nelson Chamber of Commerce on 13 March, the Minister of Labour questioned the need for redundancy payments and for penal rates for working inconvenient hours. Many workers, he said, did not want another job but instead wanted the cash handout. The secretary of the Otago Clerical Workers Union replied that if the Minister lost his job at the next election, he would be entitled to receive 3 months' extra wages and substantial other benefits, and would be able to return to his farm.

A bomb placed in the foyer of the Wellington Trades Hall killed the caretaker of the building, Mr E Abbott on 28 March, and caused substantial damage. The leader of the Labour Party called the outrage a "murder directed at trade unionists", and union statements linked it with the climate of anti-union hatred and confrontation promoted by the Government. Thousands of workers attended Mr Abbot's funeral service in Wellington on 3 April, and memorial services in other centres. Extensive police investigations have proved fruitless.

Disputes over the employment of non-unionists continued. Engineers walked out at Toyota in Thames and Cable-Price in Rotorua, food processing workers at the Aspak margarine factory in Auckland, freezing works clerical officers at the Horotiu and Moerewa works, chemical fertiliser workers at Challenge Phosphate in Otahuhu, Auckland drivers at Anchor Farm Products, Auckland carpenters, drug workers at Wellcome NZ in Auckland, hotel workers in Porirua, and woollen workers at Sarlon-Reid in Auckland. Most of these stoppages were of short duration, and the workers who had caused them by resigning from the union rejoined after "counselling" by union officials. In some instances the workers involved preferred to leave their jobs rather than join the union, but a few disputes remained unresolved, notably the case of the Timaru correspondent of the Christchurch Press, whose copy was banned by other journalists after he had left the union.

The Minister of Labour pointed out that the Press management had the right to prosecute workers who caused damage or loss through industrial action, but the company preferred to ask the Arbitration Court to conduct a secret ballot on the issue. Press journalists offered to hold such a ballot without court order, and the vote on 8 March upheld the ban by 78 votes to 33. Printers at the Press and journalists on other papers also voted in support of the ban. The editor of the Press wrote to the Minister of Labour denouncing the voluntary unionism legislation as unmanageable, impracticable and counter-productive and asking that it be amended. The Minister in reply accused the Press of being the first company to "hoist the white flag."

A postal survey conducted by Urban Research Associates on behalf of the Bank Officers Union, found that women employees were not advancing in banking at the same rate as men, did not get the same variety of experience, went on fewer courses, and were less likely to be offered transfers. More than 64 percent of the women surveyed wished to take extra responsibility. The union asked the trading banks to adopt an equal opportunities code and to appoint a joint working party to monitor it, but the banks rejected claims of sex discrimination. The union was still waiting for the results of a Human Rights Commission investigation into the subject.

Mr P Mahon, acting as an independent arbitrator, ruled on 21 March that job offers made by the Ministry of Works and Development to employees of the Auckland Harbour Bridge Authority did not constitute offers of similar employment within the meaning of the legislation passed last December, which sought to restrict redundancy pay-outs. The workers concerned were therefore entitled to redundancy compensation if they declined these offers. Later in March the Arbitration Court ruled that redundancy payments to harbour bridge workers should be based on average weekly pay rates and not on a bare 40 hour weekly rate, as proposed by the Labour Department.

The Arbitration Court on 16 March ordered the return to work of 6 riggers at the Marsden Point refinery extensions, who had blacked work on a giant Gottwald crane in a dispute over payment for a stopwork meeting. The riggers returned for a day, but then walked out again followed by the remaining 270 riggers. The company began to suspend non-striking workers, and the Northern Labourers Union withdrew union cards from the 6 men at the centre of the dispute, who were dismissed by the company. The dispute was settled on 23 March, when the company rehired the 6 men and work resumed.

The Railways Corporation took the unusual step of buying time on television to allow its general manager to tell 20,000 employees of plans to restructure the railways system. The telecast was followed up with an individual letter to each employee. The plan, based on an American consultants' report which was released simultaneously, provides for drastic staff cuts which could reach 8000 by 1988.

Speaking at New Plymouth on 13 March, the Minister of Education denounced "the naked trade unionism of a group of radical teachers who carry the somewhat misleading and seemingly innocuous banner — PPTA".

APRIL 1984

A few unions, such as the electrical workers and printers, urged political support for the Labour Party in preference to industrial action, which they regarded as bound to fail, but a special conference of the FOL in Wellington on 2 April, while expressing support for the Labour Party, also decided to launch a campaign of selective pressure on employers in support of the restoration of free bargaining and additional payments beyond the \$8 wage order. The conference endorsed whatever action affiliated unions considered appropriate. Among the first workers to respond were engineers and stores workers at the Union Carbide plant in Auckland and furniture workers at AHI Aakronite, also in Auckland.

A meeting of Auckland union officials on 6 April decided to concentrate strike action on wealthy companies which could afford to pay, and on areas where the public would not be inconvenienced. Among local companies which faced union demands were the New Zealand Sugar Company, United Concrete, Pilkington Glass, Ford Motor Company, Westfield freezing works, Fisher & Paykel, and New Zealand Steel. Outside Auckland, the Seamen's Union told employers that it wanted to renegotiate its awards, but the Prime Minister told a meeting in Otorohanga on 6 April that the Government would never give in to this type of strong-arm tactics.

The workers at Union Carbide decided to go on strike indefinitely on 9 April, after the company rejected a request to negotiate wages and conditions. A thousand Auckland hotel workers at a stopwork meeting on 10 April decided to press employers for a resumption of wage talks and set up a committee to direct the campaign. Pilkington Glass workers walked out on 12 April, after the company refused wage negotiations, and 1500 construction workers at the Synfuel project at Motunui went on strike over the same issue. One of the country's largest employers, New Zealand Forest Products, wrote to the Prime Minister urging a speedy return to wage bargaining, thus breaking ranks with the hard-line policy of the Employers Federation. Speaking at the Federation convention on 12 April, the executive director of New Zealand Forest Products queried the adequacy of the \$8 wage order which, he was told, had been accepted by the Employers Federation as "a reasonable allowance". New Zealand Forest Products also applied to the Minister of Labour for an exemption from the wage freeze to negotiate an agreement covering modernisation at the Kinleith plant, but this did not prevent unions at Kinleith from taking part in a campaign of rolling strikes in support of demands for wage talks.

On 17 April the Meat Workers Union gave the Freezing Companies Association 10 days to agree to a joint approach to Government for the right to discuss wage-related issues in conciliation; on the following day 2000 workers employed by AHI met in Auckland to plan a joint campaign, as did officials and delegates from combined oil unions. On 26 April senior executives of Union Carbide met the Minister of Labour to stress the need for an urgent return to free wage bargaining, but the strike at the company's plant continued. That same day workers at the Super Liquorman store in Ponsonby, which is half-owned by Lion Breweries, decided to stay out until they won the right to negotiate wages and conditions. The Meat Workers Union announced that since the companies had rejected a joint approach to Government, rolling strikes in selected works would commence on 30 April. The Auckland-Tomoana Freezing Works Union agreed to take part in this campaign, which opened with a 24-hour stoppage in the Otago-Southland area.

Mr Rowe, in a keynote address to the biennial convention of the Employers Federation, claimed that fixed working hours were anachronistic and questioned the need for penal rates for overtime and night work. He also advocated the elimination of company tax, a reduction in accident compensation levies, and a review of redundancy and dismissal legislation to provide greater flexibility in a labour market still dominated by "union monopolies". The Leader of the Opposition described the proposals as "unacceptable, counter-productive and provocative". The Employers Federation, he said, had been politically non-partisan, but under Mr Rowe's leadership there was "totally unbalanced partisan posturing". "A long period of absolutely non-Rowe utterances,"

he said, "would do industrial relations in this country a power of good." The Prime Minister and the executive director of New Zealand Forest Products also described the suggestion to stop penal rates as unrealistic.

The Airline Stewards and Hostesses Union held a stopwork meeting on 4 April to discuss new rosters for the North American and London services which, according to the union, did not allow cabin crew sufficient rest periods. The Ministry of Transport civil aviation division approved the rosters, but on 8 April 5 cabin crew refused to start duty in Los Angeles on the grounds that they were too fatigued. They were suspended and later flown back to Auckland as passengers. Air New Zealand served writs on the union seeking damages for disruption to flights and it also sought an interim injunction in the High Court to prevent further disruption. The company withdrew its application for an interim injunction on 13 April, but next weekend 7 more cabin crew were taken to hospital in Honolulu complaining of fatigue, but were declared fit after 24 hours' rest. On 19 April Air New Zealand announced that 4 of the 5 crew members who had refused duty in Los Angeles — 2 pursers and 2 hostesses — were to be reassigned to domestic services as ordinary cabin attendants. The fifth member of the crew had been ill in London and had produced a medical certificate. The union refused to accept these transfers, which it regarded as demotions, and gave 14 days' notice of industrial action. It later withdrew this threat, and a motion of no confidence in the manager of cabin services, and the company reinstated the 4 staff members to international, though only short-haul, services.

The Arbitration Court declared void last year's election for vice-president and 7 executive members of the Auckland Carpenters Union, following complaints of irregularities. The court ordered new elections, to be conducted by the Registrar of Industrial Unions.

After a 24-hour stoppage by packing room staff at the Te Rapa dairy company, the Wage Freeze Authority on 4 April approved a wage settlement in their long-standing dispute, which had been negotiated in January. The settlement provided for a \$13 increase, backdated to June 1983, to the 36 workers involved, and a review of existing classifications of all employees of the New Zealand Co-operative Dairy Company in the Waikato.

The State Services Commission, in a confidential circular to heads of government departments dated 4 April, listed the names and former positions of 39 former Auckland Harbour Bridge Authority employees (7 salaried staff and 32 waged staff) who had opted for redundancy payments following the arbitrator's ruling. Government departments were instructed that these workers were not to be given any further offer of employment in the public service without the prior concurrence of the Commission. The secretary of the Northern Local Government Officers Union denounced this blacklist as "devious and despicable" and the Leader of the Opposition called it "extraordinarily vindictive", but the Commission insisted that these workers would have to refund their redundancy pay if they wanted employment with the Government.

The New Zealand Refining Company applied to the Minister of Labour on 18 April for an exemption from the wage freeze for its 1984 maintenance shutdown at Marsden Point, which was to start on 6 May. The company had obtained a similar exemption for its 1982 shutdown, but it was reported that much higher rates were being negotiated this year.

The High Court in Auckland granted an interim injunction on 13 April to 7 (out of 8) Marsden Point scaffolders who had lost their jobs on the site because they had contravened a decision of the site committee. The injunction forbade "agents and servants" of the Labourers Union to refuse to work alongside these men, but the other 180 scaffolders walked out on 17 April and were joined progressively by 1000 other workers — labourers, boilermakers and painters. The labourers returned to work on 30 April, when the consortium refused access to the site to the 8 scaffolders.

Picton railwaymen imposed a freight ban on 18 April in a dispute over working rosters over the Easter-Anzac Day period. Their action stranded goods waggons and containers on both sides of Cook Strait, but the ban was lifted at midnight on 25 April.

Non-academic university staff voted 934 to 650 in favour of forming their own national organisation, rather than joining the Clerical Workers Unions.

MAY 1984

The Federation of Labour conference met in Wellington from May 8 to 11. In his presidential address Jim Knox stressed the need for a Labour election victory, the repeal of anti-union legislation, achievement of a minimum living wage, and an alternative economic strategy. The union movement, he said, was being attacked on 3 fronts, by the wage freeze, the protracted discussions on wage-fixing machinery, and the voluntary membership legislation, but had not achieved a sufficient level of political and industrial mobilisation to counter these attacks. The conference approved an executive resolution calling for a widening of the current industrial campaign and support for a Labour victory in November. The Government, said Ken Douglas, was hell-bent on driving down living standards and to smash the national awards system, destroy the traditional union membership structure, and impose a new system of wage-fixing.

Knox and Douglas were re-elected unopposed, and in the executive elections the 4 sitting members were returned, with Bill Andersen topping the poll. A highlight of the conference was the speech by the Leader of the Opposition, who pledged a Labour Government to repeal anti-union laws and to end the freeze on wage bargaining. The conference voted to establish regional union health and safety centres (the first of which was opened in Auckland) and to support plans for a new New Zealand Council of Trade Unions. It opposed the display of pornographic pin-ups in workplaces. The Electrical Workers Union, which is to hold a referendum of its members on the question of disaffiliation from the FOL, did not attend the conference.

The director of an Auckland clock-making company, who employs 3 workers, announced on 13 May that he was ignoring the wage freeze by paying them an extra 8 percent, which was about double the general wage order. Mr Bolger said he expected the Labour Department to take the appropriate action, and the Department launched an investigation. It was later found that the firm was not in breach of the regulations because the workers had been underpaid originally. The president of the Labour Party, Mr Anderton, who employs about 20 people in a small engineering business, announced that he had reclassified some of his senior staff to give them pay increases in spite of the wage freeze. It was common practice, he claimed, to provide executives with perks, such as cars, staff travel and expense accounts, to cushion the effects of the freeze.

Speaking to a business seminar on 22 May, the Minister of Labour said the present blanket award coverage would need to be changed to encourage plant and industry-based unions. He suggested restructuring the national award system on an industry basis, and suggested allowing non-union workers to negotiate their own awards. Annual tripartite consultations would set the limits on wage settlements before each bargaining round, and the traditional system of wage relativities would be broken down. A spokesman for the Employers Federation found aspects of Mr Bolger's speech "pleasing" and "exciting", but Mr Douglas commented that the effect of the proposed changes would be to deprive low-paid and low-skilled workers of protection. The Leader of the Opposition said the concept of non-unionists negotiating awards for themselves was "simply nuts", and dismissed Mr Bolger's comments as "completely provocative and utterly mischievous". Support for another of Mr Bolger's proposals came from the Minister of Tourism who claimed that penal rates were "killing job opportunities" and called opposition to the abolition of penal rates "shortsighted".

The tripartite wage reform talks — the thirty-first in a series that began 15 months earlier — resumed on 29 May. Mr Douglas announced afterwards that the Government had put forward proposals for plant-based unions which, if implemented, would destroy the national union movement and leave workers on smaller sites without effective bargaining

*except Puckett
like Jim
Bolgerworth

power. If this was part of Government policy, he said, then previous agreements reached in the tripartite talks lapsed and there was no possibility of real progress being made. Mr Rowe, of the Employers Federation, welcomed the Government proposals as "a sensible demonstration of democracy".

The FOL campaign against the wage freeze and for a resumption of free wage bargaining gathered momentum after the FOL conference. The strike at Union Carbide continued, and engineers also held 24-hour stoppages at the Motunui synthetic fuel plant and at the Glenbrook steel mill. Combined unions launched a campaign of rolling stoppages in different divisions of the AHI group, and combined unions also held limited stoppages at the Whakatane, Kinleith and Kawerau paper mills. Watersiders ceased work for 24 hours at a number of ports. Other workers who joined the campaign of protest stoppages were Auckland asbestos workers, Wellington drivers, Johnsonville ice cream workers and Hutt Valley coachworkers. The United Food and Chemical Workers Union announced a series of stoppages in the poultry industry, starting with one-day strikes at Tegel Chicken plants at Manurewa, Taranaki and Christchurch. The Auckland Hotel Workers Union launched a campaign of rolling stoppages at different hotels, starting on 28 May. Auckland stores workers continued their strike at Super Liquorman. Almost 670 Huntly miners and engine-drivers went on strike on 27 April because the Mines Department refused to negotiate an agreement covering the use of new coal grading screens. They returned to work on 10 May, but continued their refusal to operate the screens.

Wellington office cleaners ceased work over a claim for equal wages with school cleaners. Scuffles broke out between union pickets and non-union cleaners employed by Crothalls, following which a picket laid a complaint of assault with the police. Crothalls applied to the High Court for an injunction against the union, but this brought the Northern Caretakers and Cleaners Union into the dispute, with a threat to extend the strike to Crothalls contracts on major construction sites. The 3 week dispute was settled on 21 May, when Crothalls and the union agreed to make a joint approach to the Government for higher wages for cleaners.

Labourers Union members on the Maui A platform and on on-shore installations at Kapuni and Oaonui gave 14 days' notice of industrial action in protest against Shell - BP - Todd's refusal to negotiate new pay rates and allowances. The Minister of Energy warned that the Government would treat any interruption of the national gas supply as a disruption of an essential service. The Shell - BP - Todd consortium agreed to hold discussions with the Maui operators, who cancelled their strike plans. The Kapuni operators however, held a stoppage on 28 May.

The campaign of rolling stoppages in the freezing industry continued until 10 May, when the Arbitration Court heard an application by the Freezing Companies Association and Federated Farmers for a return to work order under the Commerce Act. The Court adjourned the hearing sine die when the unions and the employers agreed to hold further discussions. These talks broke down however, and the rolling stoppages resumed on 16 May, and were extended to bacon and pet food manufacturers and abattoirs, in reply to a threat of intervention by the Minister of Labour. The employers returned to the Arbitration Court and the unions again suspended the rolling stoppages from 22 May, while the Court considered the case.

Unions representing staff at Foodtown supermarkets applied for an exemption from the wage freeze to negotiate changes in employment conditions brought about by Saturday afternoon trading, which started on 14 May. Foodtown was paying its store managers substantial salary rises for increased responsibilities, but it refused to support the union application. The Minister of Labour refused the request.

The 5-week maintenance shutdown of the Marsden Point refinery started on 9 May, despite the fact that the Government had not yet agreed to a wage freeze exemption. As soon as this was obtained, the site unions and the company completed negotiations on a new shutdown agreement, which they sent to the Wage Freeze Authority for ratification. On 29 May the Authority requested further submissions but, fearful that the shutdown

would be completed without the new wage rates having been approved, most the workers walked out in protest against continuing delays.

The High Court on 22 May imposed a fine of \$5000 on the Marsden Refinery Constructors consortium (the successor to JV2) for contempt of court. The consortium had breached an undertaking given voluntarily in an earlier court case, that it would not refuse access to the site to 8 scaffolders. When these men turned up for work on the next day, the entire 3000-strong workforce walked out, with the exception of clerical and supervisory staff. The local MP, Mr Banks, accused the Northern Labourers Union of being committed to destroying the financial viability of the refinery project, while the Prime Minister claimed that there had been industrial sabotage on the site from the beginning. On 25 May the consortium dismissed the 2000 workers in its employ. The remaining 1000 workers on the site were employed by subcontractors, some of whom also dismissed their men. Only the 8 scaffolders continued working, together with clerical and supervisory staff.

Picton railwaymen resumed their campaign against a new roster and the threatened loss of jobs by working to rule and refusing call-backs. As a result, freight built up and inter-island ferry services were disrupted. The Government put the airforce on stand-by to run a passenger service, if necessary, and the Railways Corporation threatened the Picton men with suspension without pay. The Corporation also filed for damages and injunctions against the National Union of Railwaymen.

The new LPG tanker *Tarihiko* was held up twice in disputes between the Seamen's Union and the Shipping Corporation. The Corporation wanted to reduce manning levels but was forced to desist, and the Seamen's Union retained the right to operate the valves on the ship, which the Corporation wanted to transfer to deck officers.

Doctors, many of whom had raised their fees substantially as soon as the price freeze expired, were told by the Minister of Health that they must restrict their increases to one dollar per consultation. While wage earners had received an increase of \$8 a week, some doctors, said the Minister, were now recovering an extra \$600 a week. The doctors responded with angry meetings, the Minister was accused of blackmail, and some South Canterbury doctors threatened to cease giving a discount to old-age pensioners and the unemployed, but the Medical Association, with a marked absence of enthusiasm, accepted the Government directive.

JUNE 1984

The strike continued at the Marsden Point refinery extensions, with police shielding the rebel scaffolders' van on its daily way to and from work. At the refinery itself maintenance work was at a standstill, while the staff waited for the Wage Freeze Authority to accept their shutdown agreement. On 5 June the Prime Minister threatened to use the Public Safety Conservation Act of 1932 to force a resumption of maintenance work, and to introduce special legislation to force a return to work at the extension project. Next day the Government introduced a Whangarei Refinery Expansion Project Disputes Bill, which required all employees to return to work by next Monday, 11 June, on the terms laid down earlier by the consortium, or lose 4 months' entitlement to the unemployment benefit. The Bill prescribed penalties for breaches of the employment contract and gave the police sweeping powers to deal with picketers. The Opposition described the measure as a "forced labour bill" and claimed that the Government did not want a settlement but confrontation. An editorial in the Auckland Star of 7 June referred to the "election-year possibilities" of the Marsden Point crisis.

On 8 June maintenance workers at the refinery voted to return to work on 11 June and to ask the FOL to negotiate with the Government to have the Wage Freeze Authority's decision changed. The extension site workers also held a combined meeting, which voted to resume work on 11 June on the consortium's terms. The decision, which had the

approval of the FOL, was subject to ratification at separate meetings of the various site unions on Monday morning. Parliament meanwhile gave the Disputes Bill its second reading, with the Labour Party voting against some of the clauses.

Monday morning's union meetings endorsed the return to work, with the exception of the electrical workers', plumbers' and boilermakers' unions. Mr Neary told his electrical workers to hold out against terms which deprived them of their rights; his men, he said, would not resume work "under duress". The Prime Minister blamed "Andersen and his communist mates" for this development, claiming that Andersen had addressed meetings on Monday morning urging non-compliance. Andersen had in fact spoken in favour of a return to work at the Friday mass meeting and had not been near Whangarei on Monday morning.

The Government rejected a last-minute peace plan from the FOL, which provided for an immediate return to work on the consortium's terms and a compulsory conference to investigate all industrial relations problems on the site. Instead the Government put the Disputes Bill through its final stages. It became law on 12 June, and work resumed at the extension project on 13 June. The Prime Minister announced that a snap election would be held on 14 July, giving as his reason that he no longer had a reliable majority in Parliament.

A report from the Human Rights Commission, released on 20 June, expressed concern that clauses in the Marsden Point back-to-back legislation might contravene the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which New Zealand is a signatory, and stressed the need to preserve the principles of freedom of expression and assembly. The Prime Minister dismissed the report as insubstantial. Whangarei unions complained that the construction consortium was enforcing powers given to it under the legislation by dismissing workers on what they claimed were "the flimsiest of excuses". One British rigger, who was dismissed on 18 June, took his case to a hearing before an industrial conciliator, but the dismissal was upheld.

Protest actions against the wage freeze continued during the first half of the month, with stoppages by paper workers, steel workers, and storemen employed by Auckland freight forwarding firms, among others. AHI employees, drivers and engineers were among unions planning further stoppages in Auckland, but the campaign subsided with the announcement of the snap election, and most activities were cancelled. Labour Party leaders promised that a Labour Government would quickly convene an all-in conference of union and business interests to reach a "social accord", and the union movement responded by campaigning actively for a Labour victory. Employers' representatives also expressed guarded support for Labour's consensus policy.

The National Party announced that if re-elected it would introduce new wage-fixing legislation after one more tripartite meeting before the end of July. The Prime Minister claimed that agreement was "pretty close", but this was denied by the FOL, which stated that it would not take part in any more wage-fixing talks. The Minister of Labour told an election meeting in Eden on 26 June that the new legislation would allow workers at an individual enterprise or within an industry to form their own union by majority vote. The FOL claimed that such plant unions would remove specific work sites from the national award system, would lead to a proliferation of weak employer-sponsored unions at medium and small work sites, and would enable employers to negotiate rates below national award minima with these unions. Mr Rowe, of the Employers Federation, had earlier told the International Labour Organisation in Geneva that New Zealand's union structure and wage-fixing system were archaic, and that wage-fixing had to be made more responsive to market forces.

The red scare made its expected appearance during the election campaign, with the Prime Minister claiming that communist union leaders Douglas and Andersen would dominate Labour Party policies. Mr Bob Owens, the chairman of Air New Zealand, told a meeting of the Chartered Institute of Transport in Christchurch on 29 June that "the only way to fix Mr Andersen is with a 303 bullet". Andersen replied that it was not surprising

that we had bombs in Trades Hall when people like Owens made these sort of statements.

A report, *Women in Banking*, prepared by the Human Rights Commission in response to complaints from the Bank Officers Union, found that women within the banking system were disadvantaged as regards training and promotion, and asked the banks to modify their staffing procedures. The 4 trading banks employed 9000 women and 7000 men, but of 1000 managerial posts only one was held by a woman, appointed in 1982. The chairman of the Bankers Association commented that he was pretty confident that what the banks were doing was sufficient.

30 Auckland actors picketed the office of Challenge Corporate Services on 29 June to protest against the signing of 5 foreign actors for a new film. Their union, Actors Equity, planned to disrupt shooting of the film in Kerikeri.

Figures published by the Northern Clerical Workers Union showed that over 3000 members, or about 15 percent of the total strength, had resigned up to the end of April.

The Foodtown supermarket chain in Auckland agreed to reclassify its drivers after a 30 day strike, providing pay rises of between \$5 and \$8 a week. 150 Foodtown members of the Northern Butchers and Grocers Union then went on strike because they too wanted to be reclassified. The dispute, which threatened to close all 23 Foodtown supermarkets, was settled on 14 June when the union accepted a company proposal for a joint working party to review classifications.

The Union Carbide Company filed an application for an interim injunction to resolve the 2-month-old strike over a return to free bargaining. The 133 workers returned on 14 June, when the company agreed to make a joint application with the union for an exemption from the wage freeze to reassess its job evaluation systems.

The United Food and Chemical Workers Union suspended its campaign of rolling stoppages in the poultry industry, when the employers expressed their willingness to discuss a joint approach to the Government. 60 freezer hands walked out at Wattie's Tip Top ice cream factory in Mount Wellington on 25 June, when the company refused a request for an incentive payment to work a new system. The company suspended another 150 ice cream workers.

The Arbitration Court on 1 June rejected the employers' application for a resumption of work order under the Commerce Act, on the grounds that it had found virtually no evidence to suggest that the economy of New Zealand had been, or was likely to be, substantially affected by the freezing workers' rolling stoppages. This was the first time section 119C of the Commerce Act had been tested in court. The Labour Department announced however, that it intended to prosecute the freezing workers' unions under section 125A of the Industrial Relations Act, for failing to give the required 3 days' notice of industrial action. The Meat Workers Union decided not to resume the campaign of stoppages, but to seek a meeting with the employers to resolve outstanding issues and to facilitate an orderly commencement of the next export season. In a dispute over the loading of cartoned meat for South Korea at the Lorneville works, the Alliance Freezing Company obtained an injunction in the Invercargill High Court requiring work to proceed. Freezing workers in Otago and Southland called a 24-hour protest strike on 7 June, but the 4-week-old dispute was resolved and killing resumed at Lorneville and Ocean Beach on 11 June.

The Auckland Hotel Workers Union released a confidential report on Auckland Hospital cleaning by a 3-member assessment team. The report, which arose out of a lengthy cleaners' strike late last year, upheld the union's contention that cleaning standards had been unsatisfactory and ordered the contractor, Crothalls Hospital Services, to employ additional full-time staff.

The Railways Corporation obtained an interim injunction in the Wellington High Court on 1 June, restraining the National Union of Railwaymen from instructing its Picton members to withhold their services in breach of their contracts. The union sent a copy of the order to Picton, as well as a telegram advising members to work as directed by the Corporation, but Picton railwaymen continued their actions as individuals. They

denied that they were conducting a go-slow, but they refused to work additional overtime and freight continued to pile up. The union asked the Government to set up a compulsory conference with the corporation, and it also applied to the High Court for a judicial review of the regulations which require railwaymen to work overtime whenever they are called out. The court reserved its decision.

The Canterbury Rubber Workers Union called off a planned campaign of rolling stoppages, but workers at Skellerup factories in Christchurch went on strike in protest against company hiring practices. The 2½ week dispute was settled when the workers accepted an agreement negotiated by their union.

The Seamen's Union set up an Overseas Trade Campaign Committee and printed thousands of \$12 imitation banknotes as part of its effort to seek more job opportunities on overseas ships trading through New Zealand ports. The new tanker *Taiko*, built in Japan for the Union Steam Ship Company, was held up at Nagasaki in a dispute over manning reductions sought by the company.

The 9-week-old strike at the Super Liquorman store in Auckland moved closer to settlement when the parties met industrial mediator Mr T Skinner on 27 June.

Herbert Roth